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FM AMCONSUL ADANA
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INFO RUEHDA/AMCONSUL ADANA 0705
RUEUITH/AFOSI DET 521 ANKARA TU
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 0657
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ADANA 000089

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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR APRIL 21, 2006

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for April 21, 2006. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

EVRENSEL / OZGUR GUNDEM: Reportedly, Turkish Armed Forces has been preparing to strike a reported lethal blow to the PKK. The dailies reported claims that Land Forces Command's Headquarters would temporarily be shifted to the Sirnak province, and Land Forces Commander Yasar Buyukanit and Full General Ergin Saygun will be commanding there. The dailies pointed out that military deployment have already been intensified for a period of time and 240,000 soldiers have been deployed in the border area; it was reportedly striking that military preparations are being finalized just before new Anti-Terror Law takes effect and U.S Secretary of State's upcoming visit to Turkey takes place. Ozgur Gundem claims that the government is ironically attempting to solve the Kurdish issue through new Anti-terror law, and the military through 240,000 soldiers.

ZAMAN / RADIKAL: The dailies reported military deployments in the southeastern region as getting busier nowadays.

EKSPRES / EVRENSEL / HURRIYET / OZGUR GUNDEM / ZAMAN / RADIKAL / CUMHURIYET: Higher Board of Judges and Prosecutors expelled Van Prosecutor Ferhat Sarikaya from his profession and suspended him from office until the tentative decision of the board takes effect. Zaman daily branded this development as "convicting a person with death penalty in a case where he should actually be given a minor penalty such as a penalty given for a petty traffic offence." Radikal daily reminded that Sabru Uzun, Security Directorate's Intelligence Chief, had already been dismissed from office for his remarks supporting Sarikaya.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Following recent incidents that killed two people and wounded dozens of others in Kiziltepe and Nusaybin districts of Mardin, Andrew C. Wilson, U.S.'s Deputy Consul in Adana, paid a visit to DTP headquarters in Mardin. During the meeting where press was not allowed, DTP members answered questions of Wilson about recent incidents that took place in Mardin and its districts. Wilson will reportedly create a report on his findings.

CUMHURIYET / RADIKAL: A 24-year-old women, who broke up with her fianci, has been killed by his brother and father in Diyarbakir reportedly in the name of family honor.

EVRENSEL: A delegation from EMEP (The Party of Labor) went to Diyarbakir to conduct several visits in the province and to express sentiments of solidarity and brotherhood to the people

of Diyarbakir. EMEP delegation reportedly met with the mayor, local DTP organization, bar association and families of people who died during violent demonstration late in March in Diyarbakir. DTP members told EMEP national chairperson that DTP was attaching great importance to EMEP's visit which reportedly provided great morale to people and DTP.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Members of Diyarbakir-based Southeastern Headmen Association and 30 muhtars (headmen) paid a visit to the Diyarbakir Mayor Osman Baydemir and thanked Baydemir for his endeavors exerted to calm down the social upheaval that took place in Diyarbakir in late March.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Assaultants attacked DTP Eskisehir provincial building and smashed windows of offices. Members of the Party administration told that ultra-nationalists had painted intimidating remarks on walls of the building before.

EKSPRES / BOLGE: In the run-up to May 6 local chairmanship elections for AKP Adana party organization, intra-party competition has been shaking up AKP Adana chapter (see press summary 04/20). Yesterday, Hayati Yazici, AKP Deputy National Chairman, told two candidates for chairmanship, namely Mustafa Attaroglu and Omer Kaya, to come to Ankara. It is reportedly not known which candidate Seyhan Mayor Azim Ozturk has been supporting; but, the mere fact that Ozturk went along with the candidates to Ankara has triggered many speculations to surface recently. Meanwhile, Bolge daily reported that Omer Kaya has recently returned to Adana, but Mustafa Attaroglu stayed in Ankara for personal reasons. Bolge daily further reported that eleven district chairmen announced their support for current provincial chairman Abdullah Dogru. However, Yuregir and Seyhan chairmen said that they would wait for the decision of the party center in Ankara.

SABAH (GUNEY): A delegation led by the chairperson of AKP

ADANA 00000089 002 OF 002

Women's Branches, Selma Kavaf, came to Adana and paid a visit to the Seyhan Mayor Azim Ozturk.

HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): Bitlis Governor announced that the government allocated 1 million New Turkish Lira-budget for Return to Villages and Rehabilitation Project in Bitlis. The governor said that the money would be spent for infrastructural needs.

EKSPRES / BOLGE: Huseyin Celik, Minister of Education, has come to Mersin to attend a series of openings, to conduct several visits and local studies. The minister paid visits to the Mersin Governor Huseyin Aksoy and AKP Mersin party organization.

EKSPRES: A PKK militant (25), who was caught as he was preparing to launch a bomb attack in Mersin and who was arrested after being arraigned, has been found dead this morning in the Mersin jail. The body of the terrorist has been brought to Mersin University's Medical School to conduct autopsy and was then transferred to Adana Forensic Authority. Prosecutor has started an investigation into the death of the militant.

RADIKAL / OZGUR GUNDEM / CUMHURIYET: Diyarbakir 2nd First Instance Court, during the ninth hearing of the Kurd-Der (Kurdish Association) case, ruled that Kurd-Der should be closed on following grounds: the association uses Kurdish in its charter, the charter stipulates that a Kurdish library and archive should be established.

OZGUR GUNDEM: A 20-year-old feud between two families in Sanliurfa's Viransehir district has been ended during a dinner held as a result of endeavors of Viransehir Mayor Emrullah Cin.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Father of a terrorist killed in a clash in Sirnak's Besta quarter on an unspecified date claimed that authorities have still not handed over his son's body to him. The father applied to the Istanbul branch of the Human Rights

Association and said that he would hold a hunger strike in front of the parliament should authorities respond to him.

OZGUR GUNDEM: European Director of Sinn Fein, Eoin O'Broin, met with a delegation of London-based Halkevi (Community Center), and two parties agreed to start an effective, long-lasting, and continuous relationship between Ireland and Kurdish community.

SABAH (GUNEY): Hatay Governor Ahmet Kayhan conducted studies at the port of Iskenderun whose privatization process turned into a contentious issue. Kayhan, when asked by the journalists whether the port would be turned into a U.S. base (see press summary 04/20), said that he was also following such news from media. Hatay Governor later attended an endeavor to clean the environs and raise public awareness about a historical worshipping place called St.Simon Monastery which dates back to 521 B.C.

SABAH (GUNEY): Raif Turk, Chairperson of Diyarbakir Industrialists and Businessman Association, said that they had had great hopes about the government, but the government's regional policies pursued have remained insufficient to date. Turk further claimed that despite media's portrayal of Diyarbakir as a separatist city, there was actually no one in the province who would advocate for separatism.

ZAMAN / EVRENSEL: Washington Post (WP) newspaper published an article over the issue of Semdinli bombing and other bombing that took place in the southeastern region of Turkey in the last quarter of 2005. The daily reportedly asked, "Who are to benefit from the bomb explosions in Turkey?" WP article claims that the hostilities in Turkey were not only provoked by Kurdish militants.
REID